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LETTER

TO

H. BROUGHAM, Esq. M. P.

A LETTER

TO

HENRY BROUGHAM, Esq. M. P.

ON THE SUBJECT OF

R E F O R M

IN THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

IN PARLIAMENT.

BY WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.

Liverpool,

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MY DEAR SIR,

THE perusal of your very interesting letter has recalled my attention to a subject which has frequently engaged my thoughts, and I now sit down to commit to writing such remarks as appear to me the most important, on the great question of Parliamentary Reform. —In doing this, I shall for the most part confine myself to those points more immediately stated in your letter. If I should at any time exceed these limits, I trust that the magnitude of the subject, and the difficulty of restraining the hand, when both the head and heart are engaged in the cause, will be a sufficient excuse.

I entirely accede to the important proposition on which your subsequent remarks are founded, viz. “That some reform is desirable, “and that the more the constitution of parliament can be improved, the better.”—In this

sentiment I believe all the friends of reform will readily agree. Whatever differences of opinion may therefore subsist among them, are not occasioned by any difference with respect to their ultimate object, but by a diversity of opinion as to the means by which such object is most likely to be obtained; and this, though a very common-place truth, should never be lost sight of, but should unite together all those who are friendly to reform, in a determination to countenance, support, and assist each other, in every legal and constitutional mode of effecting it.

Whether, however, this very desirable result is more likely to be obtained by one great and decisive measure, or by a succession of steps, by which the representation of the people might be gradually improved, is a question, respecting which various opinions are entertained; but before I enter upon it, I must be allowed to remark, that whatever the decision may be, it is of the most essential importance to the success of the cause, that such decision should be generally admitted and acted upon by all its friends. Could this union of opinion be effected, it would be of little importance whether the object were accomplished by one measure, or by a succession of measures; but until this can be done, those persons of a more

cool and deliberate temperament will accuse their warmer friends of sacrificing the whole by grasping at too much ; whilst the eager advocates of reform will suspect that those steps, which they will call half measures, are only calculated to frustrate their hopes, and defeat their labours. On this account it would be highly desirable that something could be done to effect this union ; to remove the suspicions which these two bodies of friends, for I will not call them two parties, entertain of each other ; to induce them to make an avowal of the same common object, and even to decide upon the means by which such object would be best pursued. By this, and this only, the current of public opinion would be directed into one great channel, and whether the measures to be adopted should be of a more general, or a more partial nature, they would be enforced with all the weight and influence which the friends of reform could bring.

Now I conceive that if any such general declaration of sentiment could be proposed to the people at large, it would embrace two objects, and that without the union of these, every reform would be incomplete—First, *every representative should be fairly and impartially returned by the voice of the people* ; and,

secondly, *when returned, he should not be placed in the way of being corrupted by the crown.*—In other words, it is necessary that men of good and independent character should be returned, and that these men should not have before them a continual temptation to desert their duty. In order to accomplish these objects in their full extent, it would be necessary that the right of voting should not depend on the various, and, in some instances, capricious qualifications, which at present exist, but should be extended to all; by which I mean, to all who, as householders, are heads of families, and contribute to the exigencies of the state, as well as to some other descriptions of the community; and that all persons holding places and pensions, should be incapable of being elected, or, if they afterwards accept of places, should absolutely be deprived of seats in the house. This I should consider as a full and substantial reform; and yet this is so far from being an alteration in the constitution of the country, with attempting which the Reformers are so frequently charged, that it cannot, in fact, be considered as an alteration in the constitution of the House of Commons; which is confessedly representative, and which representation this mode of reform is not intended to destroy, but to preserve; not to deteriorate,

but to improve ; by accommodating it to the present state of the country, and rendering it capable of performing the ends for which it was intended.

This, then, being the ultimate object of all the friends of reform, it appears to me that they ought heartily to unite for the attainment of their common object ; and that every individual should act as if he had really entered into such a declaration ; and should shew, both by his language and conduct, that he is pursuing the great object which the friends of freedom have in view.

This, my dear Sir, brings me again to the consideration of the question which arises from your letter, and which I conceive to be, in substance, whether it be better, at once, to attempt a full and effectual reform, or to endeavour to obtain it in detail.—Of these two modes, I cannot help thinking that the first is in every point of view to be preferred, not only as effecting at once, that which would be a work of infinite labour and difficulty in detail, but as effecting that which no partial reforms can ever accomplish, and which such reforms would indeed be likely for ever to prevent ;—I mean *a fair and full representation of the peo-*

ple, granting to every subject his common right, and founded on simple and practicable principles. If the people of this country have *a right* to be represented in the commons House of Parliament, it must follow of course, that they have *a right* to be fairly and effectually represented, and that such representation should partake as much of the spirit of the people, and be as free from partiality and corruption as possible.—If I might use your own mode of illustration, I should say, that this is not proposed to be done by changing the machinery of the state, further than such machinery is imperfect, decayed, or useless ; and if the analogy might be pursued, it is precisely doing that which has been done in our principal manufactures, and by which we have, in this respect, obtained so decided a superiority over the rest of the world.

That such a plan, if well digested and passed into a law, by King, Lords and Commons, would be carried into effect as easily as a turnpike bill, I have not the least doubt.—It is not from the measure itself, which would be considered by the people as a great act of justice, and a decided proof of public virtue, that any apprehensions could arise ; but from the opposition which would be given to it before it

was resolved upon, by the interested and corrupt, who are adverse to all reform whatever, and by the weak and timid, who, by their hesitation and distrust, and by their reluctance to avow the real sentiments of their hearts, are most likely to occasion the very evils which they dread. To whom would the granting an equal right of suffrage be an offence, but to those who are interested in the corrupt system of trafficking in Boroughs? In fact, such a reform would not only occasion no tumult, but would be the means of preventing it; and would put an end for ever to those disgraceful scenes of bribery and intoxication, which, on the recurrence of an election, disgust every thinking man in the kingdom. By a proper division of each county into districts, every member might be elected on the same day.—No person would be under the necessity of going above a very few miles from his own house.—All pretexts for bribery, under the idea of paying the travelling charges of electors, &c. would be done away, and the house of commons would, in a great degree, if not entirely, be spared the laborious and irksome service of Election Committees, which occupy the chief part of the first session of every parliament, and are beneficial only to the lawyers who attend them.

I hope you will not think I am advancing a paradox, when I say that this mode of reform is not only more effectual than any other, but that I conceive it also to be more practicable. It is impossible for any person who considers the subject, not to admit, that however odious the idea of disfranchisement may be, the right of suffrage could not be continued to some places where the population is so reduced as to place them inevitably under the power of an opulent individual, nor could it be withheld from many towns in the kingdom, which are now risen to great wealth and importance. Now, to determine from what places the franchise should be taken, and to what places it should be granted, would be found a matter of inextricable difficulty, which would involve as many questions as there are places, and all of which would be contested with a degree of party spirit equal to that which the general question would itself create ; and after all, nothing like justice could be accomplished, but many insignificant places would still remain to tempt the ambition of a purchaser, and many places of consequence would still be deprived of their undeniable rights. It is evident, therefore, that if a substantial reform is ever to be effected, it must be done by one decisive measure, and cannot be the result of a succession of measures, which

must, from their very nature, stop short of the desired object, and confirm a great portion of the inconveniences and abuses which already exist.

But there is a much more immediate reason why a general, or total reform, is more practicable than a reform by detail, and which is, that it would meet with a more general concurrence of opinion, and unite together a much greater mass of the community than any partial measure that can be specifically suggested. Such measures are, in fact, often the result of some peculiar mode of considering the subject. What one reformer may think a most desirable or important object, another treats with indifference or contempt; but at the same time he has some favorite project in view, which, if he could but carry into effect, would be productive of the highest benefit. Under such impressions, the friends of reform refuse to assist each other, and feel rather the jealousy of rivals, than the attachment and union which are necessary to the support of the common cause. But whilst they are thus divided in views and feelings, their opponents are unanimous; always prepared to direct their whole force against any one, who may attempt, in the slightest degree, to interfere with their interests, or to wrest

from their harpy claws, that country on which they have so long, and so securely preyed. He who attempts to restore a mouldering brick, or to replace a rotten timber, is as obnoxious to them, as he who would pull down the building. It is in the holes, and chinks, and corners, which time and decay have produced, that they live, and feed, and fatten, and the first symptom of improvement is to them the signal of alarm. In proportion as the friends of reform are divided and weakened by a diversity of plans, their enemies would be collected and strong. The reformers will be accused of not knowing their own views, of having no settled or determinate plan, or of having only plans in contradiction to each other—the diversity of opinion amongst them will be artfully fomented, and triumphantly displayed—They will not know what leader to follow, what opinion to embrace, what object to keep in view, till confounded and baffled, threatened and despised, they retire from the combat, and, glad to sink into impunity and slavery, leave to their adversaries an easy conquest, and consent that they and their posterity shall be hewers of wood and drawers of water to the end of time.

On the contrary, the system of general suffrage is a system of union. It is that which

includes and embraces in itself all other modes of reform, in which they all concentrate, and to which they all profess to tend. Whatever may be the particular plan of any rational reformer, he will here find it completed, and beyond this, it is not possible for him to extend his views. To adhere pertinaciously, and exclusively, to any plan which falls short of this, is to introduce a subject of dissention, and will always be liable to be considered, by those who found their opinions upon principles of right and justice, not as a progress towards, but as a substitute for reform ;—not as intended to forward, but to prevent, the great object which they have in view. Add to this, that the feelings of the people, when once warmed and excited, will not stop short of an ultimate and substantial reform ;—that the time for palliatives is now gone by ; that those who would apply them differ from one another as to what they should be ; and that, in fact, there can be no expectation of unanimity, but in the one great object which shall embrace the particular mode of every sincere friend to reform, and by its clearness, precision, and practicability, shall recommend itself to the general patronage and support of all who have the real good of their country in view.

I have before hinted an opinion that alterations or reforms in government, are often more to be dreaded from the opposition they meet with, than from the effects they would be likely to produce. Ever since the French revolution, an universal panic seems to have pervaded this country, and because the people there became frantic, on rushing out from their prison, we cannot walk out of our houses to take the air, without fearing a similar result. This disposition is fostered and promoted with the utmost diligence, by all those whose interest it is to keep us from looking into our own concerns. As soon as any public abuse is pointed out, and a desire expressed to prevent it, we are told to look at the French revolution, and observe the dreadful effects of attempting the work of reformation. The false and slavish maxim, that it is

“ better to bear the ills we have
 “ Than fly to others that we know not of,”

is held out to us *in terrorem*, as if it were better to bear *actual, certain, and present* evils, than to take *the chance* of incurring evils of which we confessedly *know nothing*, and which may therefore *have no existence*, but in a distempered and timid imagination. It would be endless to recount the various pretexts and subterfuges which are resorted to by the patrons of corrup-

tion, to prevent the most distant attempt at reformation, but there is one which has been of late so frequently used, assumes so much importance, and is, indeed, so generally assented to, that I cannot omit noticing it.—This is the cry that *the Constitution is in danger*, and that it behoves all the friends to their country, to *rally round the Constitution*. That the constitution is in danger, is certainly true; but it is in danger from those who have corrupted the representation of the country, by converting the independent rights of electors into a private property, over which they exercise the same control as over any other part of their estates; from those who seduce the representatives of the people, by the gratifications and allurements of place and pension, and establish a system, which, whilst it avowedly purchases a considerable number of members, holds out the expectation of power and emolument to the rest, and thereby renders them even more servile than those who are actually bought. The *Constitution* of this country is a government by King, Lords and Commons; a happy, well constituted and practicable union of regal power, with aristocratical authority and popular influence, so proportioned as to produce upon the whole, the most perfect system which the world has hitherto seen. But in order to maintain that constitution, it is neces-

sary that the three powers by which it is supported, should be kept distinct, and to a certain extent, independent of each other ; and in particular, that the representation of the people should be secured from the undue influence of either of the other branches of the legislature. That this is no new, or imaginary theory, you well know. To this point the jealousy of our ancestors has been constantly directed ; and if we have in later times been deprived of the benefits of their labours, it is because we have been too indolent, or too corrupt, to maintain that independence which they have transmitted to us. Allow me, then, to ask, whether the constitution, considered in this point of view, has ever been attacked by the friends of reform ? whether any of them has ever said, or insinuated, that a better form of government could be devised ? whether they have not, on all occasions, avowed, and demonstrated, their firm adherence to the Family on the throne, their conviction of the utility and necessity of an upper House of Parliament, and whether the whole of their offence has not been, that they are desirous of restoring the House of Commons to that degree of independence and integrity, which is indispensibly necessary to enable it to perform its functions, and to maintain its proper dignity and influence

in the state? Wretched indeed would be the constitution, if it were *in danger*, from being divested of those imperfections by which it is disfigured, corrupted, and disgraced ; if it could not bear the healthful infusion which is to restore it to its former strength and beauty. The advocates of corruption may indeed cry out, that *the Constitution is in danger* ; but the danger they mean, is the danger of its being restored to health. Happily, however, the friends of reform have no desperate experiment to try ; no doubtful operation to perform ; they touch not the vitals of the constitution—Their utmost aim is the restoration of *one branch* of it only ; of that branch which is a part of, and derived from, the people, and which it is therefore the province of the people to protect and preserve. Let us then all *rally round the Constitution*—Let us evince our attachment to it by the sacrifices we are ready to make in its defence, but let us neither be misled nor discountenanced by those, who, having *the Constitution* in their mouths, and *Corruption* in their hearts, endeavour by a popular cry, to excite against others that indignation which is justly due to themselves.

Having thus stated the nature and extent of what is meant by a reform, I shall now beg

leave, more particularly, to notice the steps towards such a reform, which are pointed out in your letter, and which you inform me it is your intention shortly to take, by proposing such measures in parliament. The first of these is, *limiting the numbers of inferior placemen in the house of Commons*, and the leaving there only the Ministers and principal members of the boards. The second is *the correction of the corrupt, or defective representation of the Scottish counties*; a subject which you have most clearly stated, and of the necessity of remedying the defects of which, there cannot, in any impartial mind, exist a doubt. In the third place; you would *give the elective franchise to the English copyholders*.—You have also a fourth object in view, the *laying the foundation of a Scotch and English borough reform*; avoiding, as much as possible, the principle of disfranchisement, but obtaining the voluntary sale of some English Boroughs, giving to other towns a right of representation, and adding in some instances to the county members. These measures you conceive to be “*sufficient to begin with*,” and “*sufficient to satisfy the most sanguine reformer*.” I have classed these measures together, because I conceive the same mode of reasoning will apply to them all. That such measures, if carried, would be a great accession to the independence

of parliament cannot be doubted ; but that they would “satisfy the most sanguine reformer,” I think is scarcely to be expected. In one word, they appear to me, to go much too far to obtain the support of one party, and not far enough to command that of the other. The time for intermediate measures is past. Those who are in the possession of the emoluments of office, and rely upon borough influence, have taken their stand ; they will either retain all, or lose all ; and would consider the smallest concession towards reform, as a Hollander would the cutting through an embankment, which would soon let in the ocean that must sweep him away. There cannot therefore be, in my apprehension, the slightest expectation entertained, that any one of these measures will be acceded to, by any of those who have hitherto objected to reform ; and who, if the proposed alteration be small, will treat it as insidious ; if it be extensive, will consider it as bold and ruinous ; and, as in cases of difference of opinion, the precise degree of difference has little effect on the bitterness of opposition—except that experience has shewn, that such bitterness is generally greater where the points in difference are less—so the same artillery would be brought to bear against your propositions, as would be brought against one for a general reform in the mode of

electing members to serve in Parliament. On the other hand, the friends to such a reform, founding their ideas upon the principle that every person, under equal circumstances, has an equal right to vote, would regard your propositions with coldness, as not answering the great object towards which they earnestly look; and with jealousy, as substituting an imperfect regulation in the place of the ultimate result of their efforts. Under these circumstances, I doubt, whether either of the great parties into which the nation is divided, would even wish to see your measures carried into effect.

But although you would meet with the decided opposition of the one, and the cold indifference of the other of these parties, there are undoubtedly many persons, and those, too, of great ability and influence, who conceive that expediency is the best guide in human affairs; that the question is not so much *what ought to be done*, as *what can be done*; and that although it might be desirable gradually to correct and remove any errors or defects which may have arisen in any department of the state, yet it would not be advisable to venture on any new or hazardous measure. I shall not attempt to controvert an opinion which, is

strengthened by the natural disposition common to all of us, to enjoy what we can of life, without embittering our hours with the odious contests of politics. I will therefore only observe, that whilst we share the blessings of society, we ought not to forget that we owe those blessings to our ancestors, and that they come to us under a condition, that we should transmit them to our posterity. They have been the result, not only of great sacrifices of peace, and comfort, and tranquillity, of all that adorns and sweetens life; but of the labours, the sufferings and the blood, of many men of the greatest talents and virtue. To sit down, therefore, quietly, to enjoy what they have provided for us, or to make only such efforts as cannot, by any possibility, endanger our pleasures, or disturb our repose, whilst we cannot but see and acknowledge that the liberties of our country are endangered, and its ruin at hand, is to defraud our posterity of the debt we owe to them, and to deprive them of their just rights. This truth is already felt, it is already acted upon; and they who do not assent to it, and yet do not attach themselves to the supporters of the present corrupt system, must consent to relinquish somewhat of that importance and respectability, which all parties have hitherto conceded to them. Hence this class of individuals, the

friends, as they call themselves, of *moderate reform*, who were never numerous, are gradually diminishing, and must, ere long, either take a decided part, or be content to bear the imputation of a criminal indifference to the interests of their country. *He who is not with us is against us*, appears to be a severe and intolerant maxim; but it is a law of the intellectual, no less than of the natural world, that great masses attract the smaller; and when the clouds of heaven are congregating in different directions, the scattered fragments are soon compelled to unite with those, within whose more immediate sphere of attraction they may happen to be.

Again, this body of more moderate reformers, although not numerous, are not united, even among themselves. They are in general men of a speculating and refining character, whose ideas have a tendency to ramify and diverge, rather than to condense and unite. They would trim and prune the branches of the tree, instead of invigorating the root and protecting the trunk. Each of them has some peculiar and favorite system, which he would enforce, and to which he requires the assent and support of all other moderate men. But these have each of them also a system of his own, which is prefer-

able to those of his friends, and which, without shocking the constitution, or occasioning a nausea, would heal all the disorders of the state. For either party to rely upon the aid of such men, at a time like the present, would only be to deceive themselves. To propose for their adoption any specific measures of reform, would only be a call upon them to produce their own more favorite system. Even if their opponents were not to interpose, the contest among themselves would be interminable. One man has as good a right to his own opinion as another, and there is no subject more fertile in dissention, than that which relates to the best mode of remedying the disorders of the state.

The open and candid manner in which you have asked my opinion on this subject, calls upon me for a sincere and unequivocal answer; and I cannot, therefore, refrain from assuring you, that although I know you possess, in an eminent degree, talents to arrange, and eloquence to enforce your plans, I cannot flatter myself with any great expectations of their success. Those who are in place will be violent and tenacious; those who desire a thorough reform in the representation of the people, will be cold and suspicious to any measures which fall short of their views; and the few thinking and acting men

who are to be arranged with neither of these parties, would not, even if they were to agree among themselves, have numbers, decision or courage, to render you any substantial service.

There cannot be a more undeniable truth, than that all unsuccessful attempts at reform, confirm the abuses which they were intended to remove. Having obtained a hearing, the public mind acquiesces in the decision; and it is not without new causes and new sufferings, that the people are again induced to complain.— Hence, when any real friend of reform undertakes to become its advocate, and to propose a specific measure, he should not only consider with his most serious attention, whether such measure will effectually answer the purpose intended, but he should have at least fair and reasonable grounds to presume, that his efforts will be attended with success. A disregard to this rule, and the adoption of a contrary maxim, *that no exertion can be unseasonable, and that no effort is lost*, although supported by great authorities, has, in my opinion, been highly disadvantageous to the progress of both civil and religious liberty. It is to this, rather than to the too extensive aims of the advocates of reform, that we are, I think, to attribute the failure of their attempts. When by our efforts we can

do no good, it is incumbent on us to take care that we do no harm. To try his cause before a corrupt judge and a prejudiced jury, is never the act of a wise man. He will wait for a more favourable juncture, and will not subject to the risque of an unjust decision, a cause which he may never have an opportunity of trying again.

I am sufficiently aware of the promptitude with which the patrons and advocates of existing abuses accuse those who aim at the correction of them, of promoting violent and dangerous measures; and if the sentiments contained in this letter were made public, it might appear to some persons, that by claiming a right of voting for every householder of a certain description in the nation, I had proposed some new project, from which it might, by the same charitable construction, be inferred, that the friends of reform were always extending their ideas, as the probability of such a reform increased; and that there was, in fact, no given point at which they would remain satisfied. Were it incumbent on me to reply to such an accusation, I should find no difficulty in demonstrating its futility. From the commencement of the present discussions, the claims and pretensions of the friends of reform, who have publicly undertaken to advocate

its cause, have almost uniformly gone to the same object—that of extending the elective suffrage to the people at large; although under different modifications and restrictions, many of which would be found not only judicious, but indispensable. It cannot, surely, then, be thought extraordinary, if the people should not be satisfied with any measures which fall greatly short of those, which have already been so frequently proposed; much less can any one who professes his adherence to them, be justly charged with having extended his views beyond those who have preceded him, or with having desired that, which is either unreasonable in itself, or likely to be impracticable or dangerous in its execution.*

To you, my dear Sir, the result of these observations will not be difficult to collect. Were it necessary for me to explain them further, I should say, that it is not by agitating any partial

* It appears to me, that the most explicit and unexceptionable statement of such a reform, is that which was laid before the House of Commons by Sir Francis Burdett, on the 15th June, 1809. A Plan which he has himself most justly characterized as “SIMPLE, CONSTITUTIONAL, PRACTICABLE, AND SAFE; CALCULATED TO GIVE SATISFACTION TO THE PEOPLE, TO PRESERVE THE RIGHTS OF THE CROWN, AND TO RESTORE THE BALANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION.”

reforms, but by producing a serious conviction in the public mind, of the necessity of an uncorrupt and independent House of Commons, that the friends of reform must eventually hope for success. This conviction the people are rapidly obtaining, in a manner which they cannot but feel and acknowledge. The friends of reform may perhaps, by calm and temperate discussion, contribute in some degree to promote it; but the most powerful advocates of reform are the adherents of the present corrupt system, and the most unanswerable arguments are the present state of the country, the increasing weight of taxation, the profuse waste of the blood and treasure of the nation, the enormous sinecures enjoyed by ministerial dependents, and the appointment of inefficient and inexperienced ministers to offices of the highest trust. It is to such arguments, and to the prevailing opinion that such transactions have not met with due animadversion and restraint from the commons House of Parliament, that we are to attribute the deep impression which has been made on the public mind. As long as such practices continue, the public dissatisfaction must increase; and the time either now is, or will soon arrive, when every person must ask himself the important question, what opinions he means decisively to adopt, and what course of conduct

to pursue. If he can honestly and conscientiously satisfy himself that it is fit, and proper, that a majority of the house of commons should, in fact, be chosen in the manner they now are ; if he can reconcile it to his ideas of *the Constitution*, that the minister, should, by the means of placemen and pensioners, of representatives of decayed English boroughs, and Scotch county members, maintain a majority in the House of commons, and find a justification of all his measures ; or if he can even satisfy his mind that, notwithstanding these gross and acknowledged abuses, it is more adviseable to submit to them than to incur the dangers that may arise from any attempt to remove them, let him avow his opinions, and profess his adherence to the present state of things and his determination to support them. But if, on the contrary, he should be impressed with a conviction of the injustice, inefficacy, and absurdity of the present modes of election, and of the abuses to which they are inevitably liable, and should trace up to the corruption of the representative body, as to a polluted source, all the calamities which have already befallen, and which still threaten this country ; if he should perceive that the connection between a corrupt parliament and bad measures, is as certain as cause and effect in any other instance ; and lastly, if he should feel

the truth of that unalterable maxim, *that an evil tree cannot produce good fruit*, let him not defeat or endanger the cause of reform by the adoption of any partial expedients, or inefficient measures. A full, effectual, and constitutional representation of the People in Parliament, is now become essential to the safety and preservation of the country, and the friends of reform must therefore concede to each other those differences of opinion, as to the mere mode and manner of obtaining it, which have hitherto been the chief impediments to their success, and above all things, should be cautious how they prevent its being carried into effect, either by giving rise to a diversity of opinions, on a subject in which there is only ONE OPINION that *can* meet with universal assent; or, by attempting only *partial* and *imperfect* amendments; which, if not adopted, will injure the cause they are intended to promote; and if effected, can only be considered as having been purchased by a voluntary resignation, on the part of the people, of those inalienable privileges, which they received from their ancestors, and ought to transmit to their descendants.

Such, my dear Sir, are the reflections which have occurred to me on the perusal of your

letter, and which I have not hesitated to lay before you with the utmost confidence; well knowing, that where there is no difference in ultimate views, the best mode to be adopted for their attainment may always be discussed with the most perfect freedom, and that I should have made a very improper return for the honor you have done me in communicating to me *your* sentiments, if I had concealed or misrepresented *my own*.

Believe me to be,

With sincere attachment and esteem,

My Dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

W. R.

Allerton, 19th May, 1810.

